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STEPPING INTO THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY:
AN AGENDA FOR INDO - US RELATIONS

BY

Brigadier Pankaj S. Joshi
Indian Army



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**STEPPING INTO THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY:
AN AGENDA FOR INDO - US RELATIONS**

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

**Brigadier Pankaj S. Joshi
Indian Army**

**Colonel Donald W. Boose, Jr.
Project Advisor**

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**U.S. Army War College
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STEPPING INTO THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY :
AN AGENDA FOR INDO-US RELATIONS

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

'There is the east; there lies the road to India.'

The United States and India respectively are the oldest and the most populous democratic republics in the world. If one were to list the commonalities between the two countries it would indeed make a very long list. Both have a multi-racial and multi-ethnic society. Both cherish the ideals of democracy. India's leaders greatly admired and drew inspiration from the vitality of the American people and the framers of free India's constitution drew heavily on the provisions of, and the ideals enshrined in the American constitution. In their turn, the great transcendentalists like Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson as well as a number of other scholars and philosophers in America were greatly impressed with and affected by ancient Indian epics, philosophy, and literature.

Yet in many respects the two countries could not be farther apart. The United States, almost three times the size of India, with about one third of the latter's population, and several times greater natural resources, ranks as the richest nation in the world. The United States was peopled by men and women imbued with a spirit of adventure, people who had left their native lands full of hopes and aspirations and with a dream of bettering their and their children's lives. They all shared equally in the

travails and tribulations of settling in new lands --lands which were virgin and bountiful-- and out of this was born a spirit of equality, unparalleled in those times, and to an extent even today.

India, on the other hand, counts amongst the poorest of the world's nations. At the time of her Independence India consisted of people who were reduced to abject poverty by the deliberate policies of their erstwhile colonial masters; people in whom the spirit of adventure and enterprise was not only stifled but killed. They inherited an impoverished land, where there were few industries and little infrastructure. They inherited a society in which feudalism was living and well --deliberately implanted and nurtured by the colonial rulers so that they could exploit the masses by keeping a minority of the privileged class happy. Moreover, when India was born as a free and independent nation in August 1947, the United States had already enjoyed that position for 171 years.

Comparing the United States and India today, when both are 216 and 45 years old respectively, in terms of their abilities as nations, would thus be as absurd as comparing a 21 year old youth with a four and a half year old child --and terming the latter 'underdeveloped'.

While the peoples of the two nations generally have mutual admiration for each other, for a variety of reasons the relations between their governments, unfortunately, have not been uniformly smooth. Although the governments and people of both the coun-

tries have common goals, namely to maintain peace in the world so that they can continue to preserve and strengthen their democratic institutions and their respective cultural values,

"both nations ...differ on the best methods of maintaining ... [world peace] ... and on the point at which decisive action becomes imperative. Both are conscious that the new weapons which science has placed in man's hands make peace a condition not merely of stability but even of survival. It is on questions of how to accomplish their goals that India and the United States have often differed."²

Before any concrete measures can be suggested that each country should take to improve their mutual relations, it is first necessary to briefly examine the factors and issues which have caused misunderstanding in the past. The purpose of this examination is not to justify the position taken by one or the other but to enable us to see how the irritants can either be removed altogether or at the very least their nuisance value be reduced. Simultaneously with such an examination of the 'irritants' to a harmonious relationship, the positive aspects, or the areas of convergence of their views also need to be reviewed so that the existing ties in these areas can be strengthened. This will be done in the following two Chapters.

One definition of 'national interests' is "... a country's perceived needs and aspirations in relation to other sovereign states constituting its external environment."³ It follows, therefore, that if the interplay of national interests of different states has to be studied, the external environment in which such interplay will take place must be visualized. Chapter 4 attempts to do this. This is of particular relevance now, in

view of the cataclysmic changes that have taken place in the last two years and the repercussions of which are still not clearly understood or felt. This Chapter is essentially an exercise in 'crystal-ball gazing'.

The specific measures that both India and the United States could or ought to take for their mutual benefit and in relation to each other will be suggested in Chapter 5. These will be examined under three separate categories; political/diplomatic, trade and economic, and military/security related. In the final chapter the main conclusions and recommendations have been summarized.

CHAPTER 2 - AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT

"I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it".

-Voltaire.

There is no gainsaying the fact that despite the apparent commonality of interests between the United States and India, not insignificant sections of their populations in general, and governments in particular, have viewed the other with suspicion. Many influential Indians would find in the American policies a distinct streak of interventionism, while their American counterparts find India's 'moralizing' and 'pontification' --particularly from a position of weakness-- somewhat insufferable and reprehensible. The major issues on which the differences between the two have been pronounced can be summarized as follows:

- (a) India's attitude towards communism in general and the former Soviet Union in particular.
- (b) The policy of non-alignment.
- (c) Attitudes towards, and the perceived role of, the United Nations.
- (d) Trade and economic policies.
- (e) Perceived role of India in world affairs.
- (f) Nuclear policies.
- (g) The Kashmir issue.
- (h) India - Pakistan 'equation'.

Within the scope of this paper it is not possible nor, indeed, necessary to go into a detailed explanation of the genesis and the contending views on each of these issues. Howev-

er, three issues still merit a brief explanation since they represent the major irritants.

India's Attitude towards Communism. The fundamental issue which has bedeviled the relations between the United States and India is the latter's attitude towards communism in general and, stemming from it, towards the erstwhile Soviet Union. It is also the most misunderstood one and possibly all other contentious issues between the two countries can, in some way or other, be traced to this. It needs to be clearly understood that the Indian leaders of yore were as against communism as a *political system* as any other true blue western democrat.⁴ Where the difference lay was in the perception of each of the *military threat* from communism. While the USA emphasized and prepared for the military threat from communism, India believed that this was being exaggerated and that the threat really lay in the Communists' capability to subvert democracy internally. In India's view the solution to the problem lay not in spending vast sums of monies on arms and military build-up, which in addition to impoverishing the country gave the subversive elements a ready-made 'cause', but in spending the same amounts for economic development and raising the standards of living of their people. This they felt was the best defence against the possible invidious march of communism. In one Indian view -

"By talking of the Communist danger to the free world, of which the ordinary people in Asia have no conception, and by stressing the importance of military alliances and underemphasizing social and economic measures, the United States is ... leaving the social and economic back door wide open to subversion while guard-

ing the military front gate against an unlikely overt Soviet aggression." ⁵

To put the same sentiment in American parlance "To use a football analogy, your backfield has been drawn over to right end, when the play is really going around left end!"⁶

Another major difference between the Indian and American perspectives about communism pertains to its very nature. While most Americans have been conditioned into believing that communism is the greatest unmitigated disaster to befall humanity and its ultimate scourge, many an intellectual Indian considers it to be just one more passing fad which after running its course and arousing initial enthusiasm will fade away and become one more of the large number of 'ism's with which history is littered.

"One difference between the Indian and American views on the menace of communism ... appears to result from what might be called their time perspectives. Indians often express a confidence that with time and patience the Communist regimes will mellow and soften. When queried they often indicate that the period of time required for this might run to several decades. Few Americans are likely to be satisfied with a policy that does not hold out a prospect of improvements for the next two decades or more."⁷

In this context even more interesting is the observation made by Nehru as early as in 1937:

"All this business of Communism conquering the world. No doubt you can quote from their texts ...[but]... read the old tracts of any religion -- they all wanted to conquer the world. Nevertheless they settled down after the first burst of enthusiasm."⁸

Recent events in eastern Europe and the erstwhile Soviet Union would appear to have vindicated India's view point.

Non-Alignment. Next only to India's attitude towards communism, or possibly on the same level of misunderstanding stands the issue of non-alignment, which John Foster Dulles went to the extent of calling "immoral".⁹ However, non-alignment is not only not immoral but on the contrary the most natural policy to follow for a newly independent, relatively weak --both militarily and economically-- country, which does not wish for anything but peace, both at home and abroad, so that it can settle its own domestic problems. Problems, which such a country considers to be much more pressing and immediate than, in its perspective, the purely theoretical and remote questions of morality of, and dangers from, communism. The concept of non-alignment is "neither neutrality nor isolation, but of independent action taken on the merits and circumstances of each case."¹⁰

The vehemence with which the American policy makers (with some notable exceptions) rejected the concept of non-alignment as being anti-American and, by implication, in the zero-sum game paradigm in which all such relations were then being viewed, as pro-Soviet, greatly surprised and pained the Indian leaders. This was particularly so because Americans of stature, such as President Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson, appeared not only to understand India's compulsions but also to approve of her stand, and were quoting America's own policies when similarly placed immediately after her own independence. Indeed, the policy of non-alignment was anticipated by almost 150 years by none other than George Washington in his farewell address to the Congress in

1796.¹¹ An extension of the policy of non-alignment found articulation in the propounding of the *Panch Sheel* or the Five Principles of Coexistence. First propounded in April 1954 in the preamble to the Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet, the five principles are:

- (a) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- (b) Mutual non-aggression.
- (c) Non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
- (d) Equality and mutual advantage.
- (e) Peaceful coexistence and economic cooperation.

It is interesting to compare these principles with the proposals made by Mr. Cordell Hull during his negotiations with the Japanese Ambassador in 1941. Mr. Hull demanded of Mr. Nomura that the Japanese Government agree on the following points:

- (a) Respect for the *territorial integrity* and the *sovereignty* of each and all nations.
- (b) Support of the principle of *non-interference in the internal affairs* of other countries.
- (c) Support of the principle of equality, including *equality of commercial opportunity*.
- (d) *Non-disturbance of status quo* in the Pacific except as the status quo may be altered *by peaceful means*.¹²

Non-alignment and *Panch Sheel* are not so new after all!

Economic and Trade Policies. Due to America's firm conviction and belief that free market economic system is the panacea

for all ills of all countries in the world, irrespective of the state of their economic development and unique socio-cultural background and traditions, India's economic and trade policies have been misunderstood in the United States. Part of the confusion, at least in popular belief, also results from the use of the word 'socialistic'. Since India's economic development has been planned to usher in a "socialistic pattern of society" and, coincidentally, since most communist ruled countries also choose to call themselves socialist, many in the United States tend to believe that Indian economic policies mirror those of the Soviet Union and are yet another proof of India's communistic leanings and sympathies. Nothing could be farther from truth.

On achieving her independence India inherited a backward, agricultural economy. Stark and unmitigated poverty was the single most important issue confronting the nation as millions faced starvation every day. There was no industrial base in the country, no entrepreneurial class with managerial skills, very little private capital to invest in large scale basic industries, and inadequately developed infrastructure such as banking services and so on. Whatever infrastructure and developmental projects existed were unevenly distributed (in geographic terms) with no regard to balanced development of the whole country. This resulted from the fact that the British had only developed those areas --both geographically as well as infrastructurally-- which suited their strategic purpose. The problems were compounded by the partition of the country and creation of Pakistan.

The new boundaries had been drawn purely on the basis of religious following of the people and had no relation to the economic infrastructure(s). Consequently, in many cases the raw materials producing areas went to one country while the processing plant and facilities which used those raw materials went to the other. Partition also dispossessed many and millions of refugees had to be resettled.

India literally had to pull herself up and out of this economic morass by her boot straps.

The country needed large steel mills, machine tools, tractors, electricity, railways, large dams to provide irrigation facilities to more than 80 percent of the population whose livelihood, indeed survival, depended on agriculture. The list was endless. As mentioned earlier there were few individuals who had the kind of capital required to invest in these projects and even if there were, they were unwilling to invest money in such projects with long gestation periods, low gains and no possibilities of quick returns.

These factors weighed heavily with independent India's policy makers as well as the framers of her Constitution. In addition, Jawaharlal Nehru's personal predilections and his world view had an important bearing on the formulation of economic and foreign policies. In his own words:

"I ... am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even the kings of old and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy".¹³

One of his biographers explained the rationale behind the economic policy then adopted by India:

"If there can be no such thing as the wholesale transplantation of Marxism in India, there is equally no room for uncontrolled private enterprise in the modern State, particularly in underdeveloped countries. The utilitarian ideal of ensuring the greatest good of the greatest number prevails, and since the common man signifies the greatest number, it is in his interest largely that the national economy must be shaped".¹⁴

It is thus that the Indian Constitution lays down that the State is to strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing a just social order; the State is to see to it that all citizens have an adequate means of livelihood, that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to serve the common good; that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the detriment of the common good.

It is often argued that India could have obtained all the capital she needed from the United States or other western countries and that she only needed to ask. Such an argument, however, does not take into consideration the psychological as well as objective conditions of the time. India had just achieved her independence after long years of political and economic domination. The people were fired with an enthusiasm and national fervour which sought self reliance and independence in all spheres, including economic. The reluctance to accept too much western help, particularly in the form of foreign capital stemmed from a variety of reasons:

"...lingering suspicion of Western 'economic domination', of political 'strings' attached to such participation, a fear that acceptance of large-scale help may curtail Indian independence, a fear lest such help becomes a 'crutch' on which the Indian people will come to rely as a substitute for their own effort, as well as a fear that acceptance of such help from the West will lessen the force of India's voice in international affairs".¹⁵

As a result of these factors India opted for an economic policy, the main features of which can be summarized as follows:

- (a) A mixed economy incorporating all three methods of economic development, viz public, private and cooperative enterprise.
- (b) Government, i.e. public sector, would be responsible for setting up, operating and managing new heavy industries and machine tools plants as well as irrigation, public utilities, and power and transport facilities needed essentially to serve other basic industries. However, in heavy industries where the private sector was able or willing to participate, it would be allowed to do so and to compete with the public sector.
- (c) Some strategically important, sensitive, research and development (R & D) intensive programmes, such as atomic energy, space and some defence industries would also be organized in the public sector.
- (d) All agriculture and small, medium and cottage industries would be entirely in the private sector.
- (e) Simultaneously with the above, and in order to give a boost to domestic enterprise, suitable measures would be

adopted to control foreign capital and participation.

(f) Even domestically, measures would be instituted to ensure that wealth and benefits of industrial and economic development are distributed amongst the largest possible segment of society and that wealth and means of production do not concentrate in the hands of a selected few.

(g) In order to ensure balanced and even development of the entire country, resources would be allotted to various sectors in accordance with plans to be drawn up and monitored centrally.

The policy can be faulted on many counts, particularly today, 40 years after it was adopted. But at the time it was adopted, it seemed to be the best alternative among the many that were available. Certainly it did achieve what it set out to do, and given the magnitude of the problems that India then faced, her economic progress, *achieved as it has been through non-repressive and entirely democratic methods*, has been phenomenal. It can now be argued, perhaps with some justification, that it has outlived its utility and its rationale has been overtaken by events.

Recent world events have taken away the cause of some of these differences; in others the objective conditions have changed and the old frames of reference and the existing paradigms need to be reviewed. The remaining are not of such serious a nature as to defy resolution, given mature leadership and will on both sides.

CHAPTER 3 - CONVERGING INTERESTS

"We have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and these interests it is our duty to follow."¹⁶

In the previous Chapter we examined some of the areas where the United States and India have had different perceptions. These differences notwithstanding, there are areas of equal significance in which the two countries have common interests and in which there is scope for developing positive, cooperative, and constructive relationship.

India's primary and over-arching national interest is the socio-economic development and well being of her vast population. Towards that end she desires peace; definitely within the region and, if possible, in the world at large. It has been her experience that whenever there are tensions amongst nations, their energies and scarce resources get diverted from constructive efforts directed towards socio-economic reconstruction into unproductive and wasteful defence and security needs. While the rich and developed nations may be in a position to absorb this drain on their resources, for the poor and developing nations such expenditure becomes unbearable. It leads them to the all-too-familiar vicious circle of an arms race, living beyond one's means, deprivation of the people, and perpetual debt --external as well as internal. It leads to exchanging one form of dependence for another. When people's hopes and aspirations are not met that leads to social tensions, revolutions and, in most cases, undemocratic and totalitarian regimes. The 'guns versus

butter' argument is now a well worn *cliche*. In India, however, the argument is not about butter but bread --butter is still a luxury for the vast majority.¹⁷

In his *America Overcommitted* Nuechterlein has proposed that a country's national interests can be graphically represented as a matrix formed by arranging them in *categories* and *intensities*; the categories being 'defence of homeland', 'economic', 'world order', and 'national values' and the intensities being signified by the words 'survival', 'vital', 'major', and 'peripheral'.¹⁸ In this Chapter India's over-arching national objective as spelt out above, admittedly somewhat vaguely, is further broken down into smaller and clearly identifiable segments and assigned categories and intensities suggested by Nuechterlein. Simultaneously, and where applicable, the US position on these issues, as likely to be perceived by India has also been stated to show where the interests converge.

Defence of Homeland. India has a long border with China and Pakistan, with both of whom she has had shooting wars in the past, and with whom she has unresolved border disputes. While China has maintained a nuclear weapons capability since 1964, Pakistan has also recently admitted to having acquired a nuclear weapons capability.¹⁹ Sharing her borders with two hostile nuclear powers naturally makes this a 'survival' interest for India. India has always striven to normalize her relations with both Pakistan and China but has consistently maintained that these issues need to be resolved through bilateral negotiations, a

position which the United States has also supported.²⁰ A resolution of these outstanding problems will enable all the countries concerned to considerably reduce their defence expenditures and use the same resources for more constructive and urgent socio-economic programmes. Until recently, to some extent the security environment in the South Asia region was being vitiated due to the military aid that Pakistan was receiving from the United States, who perceived the former as a 'front line' state in the effort to contain Soviet expansionism in Afghanistan.

Related to this question is the 'vital' issue of nuclear proliferation. India has voluntarily abjured the option of producing nuclear weapons although she has demonstrated her technological capabilities in this field as early as in 1974. India firmly believes that the only sure way to make the world safe for mankind is to totally ban nuclear weapons. With the change in cold war equations both the US and Russia are now veering around to substantially reducing their nuclear arsenals. While it may be unrealistic to expect them to destroy all their nuclear weapons, under the present circumstances, and considering that there are other players in the game, it is as close as one can get to the ideal of global disarmament. If India recognizes this fact there is a distinct possibility that in the not too distant a future India and the United States may be able, not only to agree on this issue, but to work together towards some kind of a nuclear free, or at least controlled, nuclear regime.

Economic. This is one area in which the interests of India

and the United States can be said to match totally. India needs to do everything possible to bolster her economy and to improve the standard of living of her people. The United States, with its present negative balance of trade, needs newer and expanded markets for her goods. India needs capital to expand her industries; the US needs, amongst other things, cheaper labour and infrastructure costs to make its goods more competitive. This is an area of 'major' interest to both the countries and one in which both can have a symbiotic relationship.

Another major issue related to economic interests but which could become 'vital' as far as India is concerned, is freedom of the seas. India has fairly large island territories and considerable off-shore economic interests (including oil wells) in the waters that wash her shores. Besides an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of a little over two million square kilometers, she has also obtained exclusive sea bed mining rights to some 300,000 square kilometers in the Indian Ocean. She has two permanently manned research stations on the Antarctic and a merchant marine of more than ten million deadweight tons (DWT).²¹ Almost 30 % of her oil is imported. All this makes it necessary for her to maintain an adequately strong navy. The United States also has a common interest here, and looks to having unrestricted right of navigation through international waterways, not only for its own economy but also for those of her staunch allies, such as the UK, Japan and Korea.

World Order. Essentially this implies international peace

and harmony. In this area the United States for obvious and understandable reasons has global interests. Indian interests are primarily confined to South Asia. In the past the Indian and American perceptions on this subject have often been diametrically opposite. While the United States has believed that its presence and the ability to exert influence in a potential flash point has helped in stabilizing the situation, India has felt that it has had an exactly opposite effect. One reason for this differing perception was, of course, the Cold War "zero-sum" paradigm in which most international tensions tended to be viewed. However one views it though, neither of the countries wants tensions to build in any part of the world. They may have had differences on what causes or leads to the tension and how it should be reduced, but there has been no disagreement on the ultimate goal to maintain international harmony. This is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

Depending on the proximity of the area under consideration, India's interest in these issues would most likely be ranked as major to peripheral. In very exceptional circumstances (such as in Sri Lanka's problems with Tamil separatists) would they qualify to be termed 'vital', requiring positive economic or military action by India.

National Values. India and the United States have much in common in this sphere. India is one of a handful of recently independent Third World countries that has successfully weathered the challenges of poverty, socio-economic, ethnic and linguistic

diversity, illiteracy, exploding population, and so on and yet achieved dramatic progress in a non-repressive, democratic manner. While India does not take any credit for it, she cannot but find it gratifying to note that those of her neighbours who have had a tradition of military dictatorships or other authoritarian forms of government have, within the last few years, become democratic: Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh. Winds of change and democracy are also blowing in Bhutan, Burma, and the People's Republic of China.

Although in the past the United States has found it expedient to support regimes with not too glowing a record for democracy or observance of human rights, these must be counted as aberrations attributable to the compulsions of her self-assumed mission of containing Communism. In the final analysis, as the greatest champion of democracy, it would be natural for the United States to be interested in ensuring the success of the Indian experiment as a model to be emulated by other contending political systems.

Another relatively recent development on the international canvas which is a cause of concern for both India and the United States, is the rise of fundamentalist religious philosophies. Intolerant by nature, they are the antithesis of the democratic principle of tolerance of other people's views and freedom of religious faith which India and the United States propound. They have reactionary and fascist tendencies and are interested in keeping their people from acquiring new knowledge and from

progress. This too runs counter to democratic ideals of man's inalienable and undeniable right to pursuit of knowledge and happiness.

Finally, there is the area of narcotics which is difficult to categorize since it has ramifications for economic, world order as well as national value interests. Control of narcotics trafficking is a priority interest for the United States. India, although herself not a major producer of illegal narcotics, lies between two such areas, namely the "Golden Triangle" and the "Golden Crescent". There is increasing evidence to show that some of the disgruntled minority elements in India, who are indulging in terrorism, have also taken to trafficking in drugs and to using Indian territory as a transit route in order to earn money to finance their illegal arms purchases. For the present such trafficking is primarily confined to transit and transshipment through India, but inevitably some of the drugs find their way in the local markets causing concern to India as well.

In this Chapter an attempt has been made to show that notwithstanding the large number of differences in their respective standpoints, there are also a large number of areas in which the US and Indian interests converge. Moreover these differences are in the past while the future lies ahead. Recognition of these differences and identification of the common areas of interests can lead to initiation of suitable cooperative, constructive, and mutually beneficial steps now to vigorously pursue in the future. What these steps should be will be dictated and

conditioned to a large extent by the external environment in which both the countries will have to operate. In the multi-polar world which is emerging after the end of the Cold War there will be a large number of actors on the world scene and they will in their own way impact, to a lesser or greater extent, on the perceptions of India and the United States.

The next Chapter, therefore, attempts to look at the shape of the world that is likely to emerge over the remaining years of this century.

CHAPTER 4 - THE EMERGING WORLD

"I always avoid prophesying beforehand because it is much better to prophesy after the event has already taken place."

- Winston Churchill.

In the interdependent world of today, and particularly after the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union, it would be unrealistic to undertake a study of relations between any two nations without taking into consideration the global environment. When the nations in question are the United States and India, one a Super Power and the other not too insignificant an actor in the South Asian region, it would be impossible.

Understandably the United States must think globally. India, however, has no pretensions to global interests. While she would watch with interest the developments in the other parts of the world, her primary concern would be with the shape of things to come within the South Asian region. For the purpose of this paper, therefore, the analysis has been confined to the possible developments in India's immediate environment.

Iran. From a strategic view point, Iran occupies a very important position. India's relationship with Iran has had a long and fluctuating history. During the Shah's regime India watched with some trepidation the build-up of Iran's military might and her arrogating to herself --with substantial support and approval from the United States-- the role of the policeman of the Persian Gulf. Nevertheless India had quite cordial relations with Iran, mainly because of the secular and progressive

policies being followed by the Shah. With the ascendance of the Ayatollah Khomeini and his Islamic fundamentalist regime, there were some apprehensions in India lest the new rulers of Iran attempt to export their religious philosophy outside their borders, and lest it leads to unrest in India where Muslims are a sizeable minority and the balance between them and the majority Hindus is always a delicate one. Through the long years of Iran-Iraq war India urged restraint on both the parties and when the cease fire came into effect was one of the nations providing personnel to the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observers' Group (UNIIMOG).²²

Although the eight years long war had considerably weakened Iran, Operation Desert Storm and the virtual destruction of Iraq's military potential for some years to come, has changed the equation in Iran's favour and she is again in a relatively strong position in the Gulf. With the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini and consolidation of power by his successor, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the stridency of her fundamentalist rhetoric has also abated to some extent. More important, and perhaps in consequence of her neutral stance in the Gulf War and (suspected) role in the hostage release issue, the United States appears to have changed its attitude towards Iran which is now once again being admitted to the world of international diplomacy.

Iran also assumes importance in view of the break up of the Soviet Union. Some of the central Asian constituents of the newly proclaimed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) share

borders with Iran and have sizeable Muslim populations. For these people, who for years under the Communists had been denied the freedom of practicing their faith, fundamentalist Iran may well appear to be a Lode Star. The economic significance of the area, particularly of the oil in the trans-Caucasian region would not have been lost on the Iranians.

Since the end of the Iran-Iraq war Indo-Iranian relations have been cordial and the two have participated in considerable mutually beneficial economic activity. Recent reports indicate that Iran is negotiating with India for purchase of a 10 Mega Watt (MW) nuclear research reactor. This, according to the report, is to be followed up by a 220 MW reactor used for commercial power generation.²³

It would be in India's interest to have a strong, stable, and *internationally responsible* regime in Iran. The present regime appears to be quite pragmatic in its approach to international problems. It has to do this while balancing the strong reactionary forces within the country represented by the Islamic clergy and other fundamentalists. India could, therefore, be expected to try to strengthen the present regime with whatever means at her disposal short of interfering in her internal affairs.

As far as the United States is concerned, despite the reduced tensions in their mutual relations it may still not wish to see Iran emerging as the strongest power in the region, and be a potential threat to its client, Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless,

seeing the role she (Iran) can play in containing any Iraqi ambitions in the future, coupled with the potential for her constructive role in the newly independent Central Asian republics, it may not be inimical to dealing with the present regime in Tehran.

Central Asian Republics. This refers collectively to the erstwhile Republics of the now defunct USSR and includes, Turkmenia, Tadjikistan, Kirghizistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

These states share the following characteristics:

(a) All have recently declared their independence from the erstwhile USSR and are yet to find their feet as independent democratic nations.

(b) Nevertheless all have the basic structures of a modern state such as some form of a constitution, legislature, executive, and judiciary, although these are patterned on a single-party system and not on a multi-party free election system.

(c) All are land-locked and will have to depend on the goodwill and/or other forms of guarantees from their neighbours for their external trade and, by implication, for their survival.

(d) All have sizeable Muslim populations, ethnic minorities and traditional and historic ties with neighbouring countries including China, Afghanistan, and Iran.

(e) As of the time of writing none have their own defence forces, monetary units, or independent foreign policies -- matters which 'independent' states usually jealously guard

as their sole prerogatives. These issues are the subject of discussion amongst the members of the CIS and are in the process of evolution.

(f) All have lopsided economies which were developed according to the needs and priorities of the former USSR and do not necessarily represent the strengths and capabilities of the individual states.

(g) Some have nuclear weapons deployed on their territories. The control of these is a contentious issue.

(h) All are lacking in entrepreneurial and managerial skills required in a free market economy.

(j) To a very large extent the fate of these countries will depend upon and will be tied to that of the other 'non-Asiatic' members of the CIS.

Absorbing the constituents of the CIS in the comity of nations is going to be the greatest challenge to statesmanship in the remaining years of the decade. Depending on how they are treated now, in the next century they could become either its useful and participatory members or renegade, defiant pariahs and threats to world peace.

To India these states hold special interest and would represent not only a challenge but also an opportunity. Unlike the European and to some extent even the trans-Caucasian members of the CIS, in whose welfare Europe would have significant interest, the central Asian states are somewhat isolated and, in a manner of speaking, 'beyond the pale'. India would like to see

these states steer clear of any fundamentalist tendencies and to develop healthy democratic institutions. This implies that their economic development and well being should be the first priority, for experience shows that poverty, a feeling of discrimination and a sense of deprivation, whether economic or political, are fertile soil for fundamentalism to take root.

Three things would be required for bringing this about; massive infusion of capital, managerial and entrepreneurial skill and expertise, and an empathetic understanding of the problems. India today lacks the first, has an abundance of the second and, being herself a Third World developing Asian nation which has achieved a degree of economic development and progress by democratic methods, is in the best position to provide the last.

It is felt that the United States' long term interests would also be best served by seeing democracy flourish in this (from its point of view) remote area. A democratic central Asia with a population of over 46 million²⁴ would be a good foil to any fundamentalist expansionist ambitions of Iran. It would also provide a rallying point for those of the Chinese people who have dreams of a democratic China and who, for the present, are biding their time.

Seen in this light it may not be too far fetched to think of a cooperative arrangement whereby the US provides the capital and India the expertise, not only for the economic reconstruction of these states but also for the development of democratic institutions. Obviously, such an arrangement will only work if the

initiative for it comes from the states concerned themselves. However, provided that they are assured that the presence of the 'outsiders' will be unobtrusive and to the minimum extent possible, it should not be impossible to obtain their willing cooperation. It must not be forgotten that there is a history in these states of 'Russian colonialism', whether under the Tsarist regime or the Communists. They will, therefore, be most likely to view with suspicion any such moves emanating from either India or the USA.

This is where the challenge to statesmanship and the empathetic understanding referred to above come into play.

Afghanistan. Afghanistan, the traditional buffer between British India and Tsarist Russia and the board on which the 'Great Game' was played out at the turn of the last century, again seems to be poised, a century later, to play an important role in India's future. The situation in Afghanistan today hangs in balance with the 'negative symmetry' having taken effect from 01 January 1992. Ranged on either side are the rabidly fundamentalist Gulabdin Hekmatyar and President Najibullah, the 46 year old former head of the secret police *Khad*. Sitting on the fence and joining either as it suits them are the large number of tribal clans and disparate *Mujahideen* groups.

Notwithstanding the past predilections and track record of President Najibullah, after the withdrawal of the Soviets and stoppage of military assistance from them, he has progressively declared, and shown, himself to have become more and more demo-

cratic in his outlook. In any event, between the numerous warring factions at present his is the only voice of moderation and, in the final analysis, the choice is between his form of secular democracy and Hekmatyar's reactionary, fundamentalist regime. If the latter succeeds, it could start a chain reaction which could eventually lead to a potentially destabilizing situation on the sub-continent. Not only would it mean a fundamentalist putsch northward into the central Asian republics but also into Kashmir. It is most unlikely that Pakistan can remain unaffected by such developments, and a fourth round between India and Pakistan over Kashmir could become a distinct possibility.

Certainly not a pleasing prospect either for India or the United States -- particularly now that Pakistan has made an open admission of her nuclear capability.

China. In the past the American and Indian policies on the Chinese question have been marked with ambivalence. In the early 1950s when India was championing the Chinese cause and was pressing for seating the latter in the United Nations, the United States vehemently opposed all such moves. As relations between India and China deteriorated in the mid '50s and early '60s, the United States gave unstinting support to India, including military aid. However, in the late '60s and early '70s the Pakistan-China - America nexus, ostensibly aimed against the Soviets, took precedence and in America's calculations India was relegated to a lower priority.

Today China's position appears to be somewhat precarious.

With the Soviet Union gone, the mantle of leadership of what remains of the communist world has fallen on her shoulders. She will have to live up to the new responsibilities that this entails if she is not to be totally discredited in the eyes of the remaining few faithfuls who still look up to her for leadership. This is particularly so in view of the virulent rhetoric she had used against the Soviets in the not too distant a past. However, she may find it difficult to effectively fulfill this role which has come to her unbidden. In the attempts to improve her economic position she is trying to build closer relations with the US (with whom she enjoys the Most Favoured Nation status) and Japan, both epitomes of 'capitalism'. Such flirting with the 'class enemies' is difficult to reconcile with the revolutionary, anti-imperialist image that she would be expected to project.

In fact it is a moot question whether China will continue to have a communist regime at all by the end of the century. As the events of Tiananmen Square in June '89 have demonstrated, the Chinese youth have also been 'infected' by the virus of democracy. Although the authorities have succeeded in putting down the movement, this can only be a temporary affair and the people's aspirations cannot be suppressed for an indefinite period; particularly after the events in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Secondly, some of the newly independent states of the former Soviet Central Asia have common borders and traditional ethnic and religious links with China's Sinkiang province.

Indeed in 1962 a sizeable number of refugees had migrated from here into the Soviet Union.²⁵ It is very likely that the incipient centrifugal tendencies in China's outlying provinces will raise their head again. Thirdly, Hong Kong is to revert to China's control by 1997. It is difficult to say at this moment how well this bastion of capitalism and free market economy will integrate in the controlled economy of China and, more important, how it will affect the democratic aspirations of the Chinese people. For the present the Chinese Government is trumpeting its policy of "one country, two systems", under which the socialist system and policies of the PRC will not be applied to Hong Kong who will be allowed to practise its capitalist system for 50 years²⁶. However, it may well turn out to be the thin end of the proverbial wedge resulting in the break up of communist China. And lastly, the ageing leadership of China has to some day make way for the new generation, who may not be as well motivated by ideology and dogma and may well decide to be more pragmatic and follow the capitalist path.

This scenario of the possible democratization of China cannot be de-linked from the future of Taiwan. Taiwan represents one of the economic miracles of the region. It has close -- though indirect-- relations with the US and has not withdrawn its claim to mainland China. In the event of a democratic transformation of the People's Republic, however, it is debatable whether the mainland Chinese will accept the leadership of the Taiwanese. Also, if the experience of the United Germany is anything to go

by, the chances of the Taiwanese themselves wanting to take over the burden of supporting the relatively backward economy and the millions (possibly over a billion, by the turn of the century) of the mainland Chinese appears to be remote. Indeed, there is already a movement for independence within Taiwan. It is, therefore, quite possible that the two may continue to keep their separate identities, or at best may agree to form a loose federation.

As mentioned above India has always sought to normalize her relations with China. However, to a large extent these are conditioned by the outstanding border dispute between the two countries. Although the thirty years since the border war have not seen the relations fully normalized, at least the two are now talking to each other. The then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in December 1988 was reciprocated by the Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng when he visited India in December last year. The visit was not expected to lead to a resolution of all outstanding issues. However, it did set the stage for further dialogue. Both sides made diplomatic gestures such as reopening of respective consulates in Shanghai and Bombay, signing of a memorandum of understanding on use of outer space, resumption of border trade in historically linked areas, and on India's part of reiteration of her position that Tibet was an autonomous region of China. All these should help in creating the necessary atmosphere and should go a long way in promoting the process of normalization of relations.

For various reasons it would be in China's interest also to normalize her relations with India at this stage. As noted above the future of the Marxist regime in that country is itself a matter of conjecture. Post-Tiananmen Square, her relations with the USA have soured to some extent. The demise of the Soviet Union has removed one of the main causes of her hostility towards India. Her quest for economic development compels her to reduce her expenditure on defence and, by implication, to have no outstanding border disputes with neighbours which could lead to a flare up. And finally, India has recently been admitted as a "sectoral partner" of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which will see India involved in trade, investment, training, and science and technology in an area which China considers to be her own 'back yard', namely the South China Sea. All these developments might make her leadership consider cultivating India. Obviously, no quick results, or breakthroughs, are as yet in sight. But then both India and China are 'Orientals' and have plenty of patience!

It would be of interest to speculate on the shape of America's relations with China in the years to come. The answer would depend on many factors; how serious, for example, would the American leadership and public be about their self proclaimed mission of containing communism? For *prima facie*, so long as communist China remains, the US struggle against communism is not over. Similarly many observers saw the Sino-American rapprochement only as a marriage of convenience to contain Soviet expan-

sionism. With the latter's demise will this union flounder on the rocks or have the two learnt to respect, if not love, each other sufficiently to be able to live together despite their differences? In the days before 1972, many in the United States saw India as a model of democracy for the newly independent countries to emulate and which could be contrasted with, and offered as an alternative to, the authoritarian communist regime in China. Does that view still hold good? And what if China also dismantles her communist regime and becomes democratic? In that case towards whom will the US lean; the old or the new democracy?

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).²⁷

No discussion on India's interests in the region can be complete without examining her position and role in South Asia and her relations with the members of the SAARC. In this context the single most important fact that cannot be wished away is that geography and nature have made India *pre-eminent* in the region. Geographically, she occupies the central position in the region and is the only country to have common borders with the other six members of the Association. Within the region she accounts for 73.4 percent of the land area, 76.5 percent of the population and 97.2 percent of the gross national product.²⁸ She also has the largest military forces in the region. As a result, whether she actually does so or not, she appears to her neighbours to *pre-dominate* them. In this respect her position is analogous with that of the United States in the latter's relations with its Central and South American neighbours.

The cornerstone of India's foreign policy in the region has been the principle of bilateralism. This stems from her firm rejection of the theory of 'power vacuum', which postulated that consequent to the withdrawal of the British from areas east of Suez, a vacuum had been created in this region and which needed to be filled up --by implication-- by either the USA or the USSR. India has consistently maintained that the presence of outside powers only exacerbates the existing differences between the countries of the region and that left to themselves they are perfectly capable of finding a mutually acceptable solution to their problems.²⁹ She has thus untiringly worked towards minimizing --if not totally excluding-- the presence and influence of extra-regional powers in the region. This principle has also been incorporated in the SAARC Charter and the members of the Association have agreed that "bilateral and contentious issues should be excluded from their deliberations."³⁰

The reverse face of the coin, of course, shows a different picture. Her insistence on this principle is seen by many in the region as an attempt by the vastly stronger India to impose her will on others and to prevent them from seeking a 'collective' remedy to any grievances that they may have against her individually. Her detractors cite many instances as a proof of 'India's expansionist ambitions and bullying attitude.' The naval expansion programme undertaken by India, although to meet her legitimate security requirements, has further added to the apprehensions and misgivings not only of her South Asian neighbours, but

also of Australia, Indonesia, and others.³¹ Such misunderstandings is something that India will have to learn to live with. She will have to constantly strive to prove her good faith and be conscious of the sensibilities of her smaller neighbours.

If the US reactions --or the absence of any-- to India's armed involvement in Sri Lanka and the Maldives (at the express invitation of their respective governments) is anything to go by, it seems that there is a tacit understanding and approval of India's concerns and her perceived role in the region. The US is apparently satisfied that India does not harbour any hegemonistic ambitions in the South Asian region and only wishes to live in peace and harmony with her neighbours. It should also be clear to any but the most simple-minded that the Indian Navy does not pose any threat to the US Navy. It needs to be noted that over the past few years India has stopped her public criticism of the US naval base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. India must continue to reassure the US and others on this account. Towards this end a 'white paper' explaining the need for India's naval expansion may go a long way in setting at rest the fears that many harbour on this score.

The end of the Cold War and the outcome of Operation Desert Storm have drastically changed the power equations in the South Asia region. It is obvious that many of the questions raised by these changes cannot yet be answered with any degree of certainty. What is equally obvious, however, is that the United States now has a considerable economic and 'world order' stake in the

stability of the region. And since in the modern world economics increasingly drives policy, one may not find the USA encouraging developments which are likely to disturb the status quo. Also, by measuring power on an economic scale, one can clearly discern some power centers. According to one analysis:

"Taken individually, the countries of Western Europe will be joined by a new group of medium-sized powers that will grow substantially ... by 2010 India's GNP will approach that of France ... "³²

According to another analysis "... the 1990s will be the decade in which India emerges as a major regional power of Asia."³³

If the above analyses are accepted, it should be possible to visualize a multi-polar world in which there would be six powers; five 'regional' ones of varying economic and military strengths, and one global, i.e. the USA. The five regional powers would be the European Community (EC), Russia, India, China, and Japan. This distribution of power will, perhaps, reflect itself in some form of restructuring of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council which, based as it is on the power equations that existed 45 years ago, many feel no longer reflects the present day reality.

This, then, is the likely shape of the emerging world. Many of these prognoses may not come true. Many of the assumptions may be questioned. Nevertheless, for want of anything better or more concrete, perhaps we can proceed on the assumption that it is a fair assessment on the basis of which suggestions can be made for the specific steps to be taken by the two countries.

CHAPTER 5 - AN ACTION PLAN

Some men see things as they are and say "why?". I dream things that never were and say "why not?"

- Robert Kennedy, 1966.

The foregoing examination will be of no value if it does not suggest some positive course(s) of action for the United States and India to follow in the future. These are being considered here in three separate areas; political/diplomatic, trade and economy, and military/security related issues. However, it must be obvious to any discerning reader that such a division is somewhat artificial and that an initiative in one area will have a bearing on the others.

Political/Diplomatic Field

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union have presented India and the United States with an opportunity, the like of which was never before available for the last 45 years. It has removed the greatest stumbling block to the efforts in the past to improve Indo-US relations. Now the two can take a fresh look at each other's points of view and compulsions and see them, not as sub-sets of the Cold War equations but as the independent actions of individual states acting in their own rights. This should result in a better understanding of each other's positions.

It is sometimes suggested that now that the Cold War is over, the policy of non-alignment has lost its relevance. Such suggestions display a lack of understanding of the philosophy of

non-alignment. It needs to be reiterated that non-alignment was never aimed at the Cold War *per se* and it was definitely not anti-American. It was only perceived to be so by some.³⁴ It is a policy which seeks freedom to act in pursuit of one's national interest independently of military alliances and blocks. Such freedom India, and conceivably other countries too, will continue to seek and, therefore, the death of the Soviet Union does not automatically spell the death of non-alignment.

In the years to come both India and the USA must continue to champion the cause of democracy. With all its drawbacks --and many can be cited-- this form of government is still considered to be the most suited for promoting international harmony and peace. Governments that are accountable to their people and established institutions which are above individuals, are less likely to embark on adventurist policies. To this end, both must strive to encourage and help nations develop democratic institutions.

Having said that, it must also be said that the people are the best judge of the kind of government that they want. One of the main drawbacks of democracies is that they are very slow to show results. Also in order to succeed they require of their people a degree of maturity and tolerance that can only come with long years of experience and freedom. As a political philosophy and system it has to *evolve from within* and cannot be imposed from above. Unfortunately in many of the Third World countries these conditions do not obtain. With their history of colo-

nialism and poverty many of them are facing problems which the Americans have never faced and cannot even conceive of.

Because of their dynamic temperament and the fact that they have had the luxury of developing their political system and institutions unimpaired by external interference over a period of more than two hundred years, the Americans are generally impatient with anyone who does not accept what, to them, is the universal and obvious truth; that democracy is the best form of government. However, the leaders of some of these countries are in an unenviable positions and have a very difficult task on their hands. Riven as their societies in many cases are with local rivalries and grievances, they have to balance many mutually exclusive issues and aspirations. Due to the multifarious pressures and the need to show quick results, democratic institutions become particularly vulnerable. What they need is not words but time to evolve. They need to be left alone for some time and not "crowded" or hustled into a democratic system for which they may not be yet prepared and ready. Above all they need patience on the part of the rest of the world. There may be temporary setbacks. But eventually democracy will prevail and even where it does not, the emerging systems will learn to live with democracy. As the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said:

"We have inherited a big house, a great world house in which we have to live together as black and white, Easterners and Westerners, Muslims and Hindus, Gentiles and Jews, Catholics and Protestants, a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interests who, because we can never again live without each other, must learn, somehow, in this big world to live with each other."³⁵

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the extent to which anti-communism will continue to dictate American policies is not yet clear. But it seems most likely that its policy makers and public will not be so obsessed with communism as they were in the past. This should enable them to view in the correct perspective the revolutionary movements which may erupt in the Third World and see them as what they really are --movements driven by nationalism or even sub-nationalism, and local rivalries. Some of these may be dressed up in different shades of Red and may mouth rhetoric taken out of Marx, Lenin, Castro, Che, or Mao. However, they would almost always be local affairs and would not pose any threat to the democracies of the world. International communism is dead, as indeed it had been for quite some years; only its ghost has been resurrected by the paranoia of some.

An area in India's immediate neighbourhood where the United States and India can and need to take some urgent initiatives is Afghanistan. For reasons explained in the previous chapter India is deeply concerned with the developments in that country. The US stand on Afghanistan in the past has been that President Najibullah must step down and hand over power to the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) operating out of Peshawar in Pakistan. However, this was before the 'negative symmetry' came into effect and both the parties to the conflict stopped receiving military and moral support from their respective sponsors. Without the inflow of fresh materials the conflict in this war-torn country can continue until both sides are exhausted, the nation is bled

white, and one of the parties finally emerges victorious -- pyrrhic though the victory will be. To permit this to happen, however, would be very cynical indeed.

There is no question but that whatever the solution, it must be an indigenous one and that the Afghan people themselves must decide their fate and future. However, it is equally true that the people must be given a fair opportunity to work out a solution and exercise such choice. This is not possible in the prevailing situation. It is felt that the formula outlined below, or its variants may help pave the way for a peaceful and democratic solution to the problem:

- (a) Declare an immediate cease fire to be guaranteed and supervised by a suitably composed UN peace keeping force.
- (b) Allow time for the return of refugees.
- (c) Release all political prisoners.
- (d) Form a 'National Government' composed of members of the present AIG as well as thr Najib Administration.
- (e) After a suitable interval for political activity conduct free and democratic elections under the aegis of the UN on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

Such a plan, to have any chance of success will have to have the backing of the United States, and possibly even Russia. It will be fair to all parties and above all, it will give democracy a chance. The alternative, as mentioned elsewhere in this paper, is a rule by fundamentalist zealots with its attendant implications.

As far as India - Pakistan relations are concerned, the position is quite clear --at least on the Indian side. Article 1 (ii) of the Simla Agreement, signed on 2 July 1972 by the then respective prime ministers of the two countries clearly lays down that the two countries are to settle their differences by peaceful means through *bilateral negotiations* or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between themselves.³⁶ The US Administration has also recognized this and lately has, for example, desisted from commenting on the Kashmir issue whenever, contrary to the letter and spirit of Simla Agreement, Pakistan has tried to raise it in international fora. However, when Pakistan supports, both materially as well as morally, those elements which are inimical to India's interests and are engaged in armed attacks on Indian sovereignty, the matter goes beyond the realm of bilateralism and becomes an international issue. It qualifies Pakistan to be treated on a par with those countries which are known to be indulging in state sponsored terrorism. It is in this context that India expects a stronger condemnation of Pakistan than has so far been forthcoming from the United States and other world democracies.

India fully understands and respects America's desire to have friendly relations with both India and Pakistan. In the past its relations with India and Pakistan have tended to suffer from the "either or" syndrome. She could be friendly only with either of the two at any one time but never with both together. Friendly relations with one were automatically viewed as being

antagonistic towards the other. This does not have to be so. Unfortunately, in India and Pakistan there are people who would like to make political capital out of the slightest perceived "tilt", to use a Nixonian term, on America's part towards the other. In India such people are in the minority, but in her democratic system of free press and freedom of speech, they get the opportunity they need to propagate their views. In Pakistan, on the other hand, often it is the State that encourages such reactionary elements. America needs to recognize this and not be overly sensitive to criticisms that may occasionally appear in the Indian press.

In these circumstances it would certainly be in India's interest if the United States were to have equally friendly relations with Pakistan as well as India. As a friend of both, India would expect the USA to have the interests of both at heart and to counsel restraint on the party that exacerbates the already, and unnecessarily, existing tensions between the two and which vitiates the general atmosphere. America would also be able to effectively bring to bear her considerable moral force to maintain peace in the region.

Violation of Human rights is an issue which keeps coming up in the American press with amazing regularity. There are allegations that the Indian Security Forces (SF) have been using excessive force in dealing with terrorists in Kashmir and Punjab. Some of the accusers are of dubious antecedents and their motives in bringing up the issue questionable. Some others, on the other

hand, are transparently sincere in their belief that such violations are taking place on a regular basis and that the SF are to be blamed squarely and entirely. This question needs to be viewed in its proper perspective.

As far as the Indian Army is concerned, the application of military law and administration of military justice is very strict and any incident of violation of human rights is dealt with, severely and swiftly, whoever the perpetrator. The Indian soldier is a highly disciplined, motivated and humane person. His commanders are well educated professional officers imbued with the principles of secularism and tolerance and are well above narrow, parochial concerns of caste, community or religion. Indeed, so confident is the Army's leadership of the fairness of its officers and soldiers, that in early 1991, the Chief of the Indian Army himself invited the Press Council of India³⁷, to investigate the allegations in the western press of excesses by Army personnel in Kashmir. Accordingly the Council appointed a Committee headed by a retired Chief Justice of India and consisting of eminent journalists and persons from other walks of life. In its report adopted on 9 July 1991³⁸, the Council fully exonerated the Army and, in fact, commended it on its human rights record. The Report concluded :

"The Indian Army has broken new ground in taking the bold decision to throw open its human rights record to public scrutiny through the Press Council of India. Few armies in the world would invite such an inquiry. The Indian Army has cooperated in this task. And it has, all things considered, emerged with honour."³⁹

Unfortunately the same cannot be said to be entirely true of

the police and some para-military forces. It must, however, be appreciated that the police forces are generally recruited from the same areas and are under much more pressure than are the army personnel. They are operating under extreme provocation and constant threat from terrorists, not only to themselves but to the safety of their families. There is among them an acute feeling of frustration and unfairness because all their actions get magnified out of proportion while none of the activities, excesses, and atrocities perpetrated by the terrorists are ever commented upon or reported by the various human rights groups. In this context the Press Council Report referred to above has this to say:

"Human rights organizations and the media play a valuable watchdog role but have an obligation to be far more rigorous in piecing together information and publishing what might pass for hard findings. The mere say-so of alleged victims and propagandists can only be treated as such and suggest a cause for inquiry, no more."⁴⁰

While all efforts are made to bring to light cases of violation of human rights and to deal with them expeditiously, some isolated cases do go unreported. 'Justice delayed is justice denied' is an old *cliche*. Regrettably, in India 'due process of law' sometimes inordinately delays finalization of cases, prolonging the agony of those who are affected and heightening the sense of denial of justice. In the United States, perhaps understandably, the Congress is more vociferous about the human rights issue. The Administration appears to be cognizant of the real facts and not too critical of the Indian Government's

position. The latter, therefore, needs to adopt a two pronged strategy; firstly, of course, to improve its own record insofar as it relates to the police and para-military forces and, secondly, to simultaneously launch a massive 'education' campaign with the US media, legislators, and human rights groups as the target audience.

And finally, the nuclear issue. Here, the ball is clearly in India's court. Whatever her justifications for not signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a time has come for India to review her policies on this very important issue. When both Russia and the United States are taking far reaching measures to drastically reduce their nuclear arsenals, India's insistent (or less flatteringly, obdurate) stand that the NPT is discriminatory, does tend to become a little exasperating. At the same time the United States should understand India's concerns and apprehensions at being hemmed in between two hostile nuclear states who have a history of giving each other collusive support when engaged against India. Under such circumstances it would be expecting too much of India to totally renounce the nuclear option; particularly when it is clear that in this field no one else can guarantee her security and, more important, when she has the capability to be self reliant.

However, India cannot afford to be totally insensitive to world opinion and ignore the ill will and fears generated by her persistent refusal to even consider any proposals short of total disarmament. This is particularly so because there is many an

informed opinion maker and analyst in world capitals who understands that proliferation is now a *fait accompli* and perhaps now the issue is not non-proliferation but *control of proliferation*. According to some reports there is even a tacit understanding of India's legitimate security concerns and a desire to get her involved in formulating a regime in which a runaway, uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear weapons does not occur in the region. When the US Under Secretary of State, Mr. Reginald Bartholomew visited India last fall,

"... rather than show India the dotted line, ...[he] ... made it clear that the US understood India's compulsions on the NPT. ... the US needed India to make the 'right kind of noises'... : not helping other nations go nuclear, avoiding nuclear tests and expressing the willingness to work for nuclear detente within the region."⁴¹

India must, therefore, climb down from the pedestal on which she perceives herself to be standing and must start considering the different options, however 'principled' her objections to some of the proposals may be. She must realize that to the world these objections sound hollow. Pakistan's recent proposal for a nuclear free zone in South Asia is a case in point. The proposal may have many inconsistencies and may not stand detailed scrutiny.⁴² But to reject it out of hand does not do credit to India's sense of fair play. India should examine the proposal, point out the inconsistencies and put up her counter-proposal. She must not only participate, but be seen and believed to be participating, in the dialogue. Most important, she must be sincere about her participation and not indulge in stonewalling

merely to stall the issue.

Trade and Economy

Trade and economic relations go hand in hand and, taken together, today hold the most promise for vastly expanded and mutually beneficial cooperative arrangements between India and the United States. After showing a consistent growth rate averaging over 5% in the past decade, India's economy today is at a stage of development where it can welcome, rather than fear foreign investment. (This, of course, should not be confused with its fiscal position which, to say the least, is still quite precarious.) The United States is India's single largest trading partner (not counting the European Community).⁴³ India, with its consumer class of over 80 million, represents a market larger than the population of any single European country.⁴⁴

In a previous chapter the reasons for the economic policies that the successive Indian governments adopted and continued to pursue have been discussed. An evaluation of these policies will show that on the positive side they enabled India to substantially reduce absolute poverty, to raise the standards of living of her people, to become not only self sufficient in food but a net exporter of food grain and other agricultural products, and to build up a respectable industrial base. However, an equally long list of negative fallout can also be drawn up. It bred an entrenched bureaucracy with a vested interest in continuing with the *status quo*. Some of the public sector undertakings became a kind of welfare organization whose sole *raison d'etre* was gener-

ating employment with complete disregard to efficiency. The "License Raj"⁴⁵ encouraged and institutionalized corruption; bureaucratic delays became endemic and scared away whatever little foreign capital was allowed to trickle in. While the country developed a good industrial base, in the absence of competition from foreign products the manufacturing industries continued to produce sub-standard goods, and continued to enjoy a certain degree of monopoly behind high tariff walls. Thus, while the rest of East and South-East Asia was riding on the crest of an economic boom, India was being left behind. According to one Indian economist, "From independence in 1947 until today, we have had less total foreign investment than Indonesia is getting in a year."⁴⁶ Poor fiscal management, driven more by political expediency rather than economic good sense, high and wasteful government spending, skewed tax laws resulting in generation of "black" money (a term used to denote income on which taxes have been evaded), and flight of capital out of the country; these are some of the other ills affecting the Indian economy.

The new Government of India (GOI), after coming to power in the summer of 1991, has taken many initiatives to substantially open its economy and markets to foreign investment and participation. In a package of industrial and economic reforms, the Government announced a series of measures which, it is hoped, will make it more attractive for foreign investors to participate in joint ventures in India. Briefly these measures are:

- (a) Government approval will be granted automatically for

technology transfer agreements, permitting American companies to negotiate directly with Indian companies on a wide range of technology driven ventures.

(b) Licensing procedures have been simplified and streamlined.

(c) In a major departure from the past policies, some 34 economic sectors have been identified in which foreign companies can now own 51 percent equity (as against the earlier 40 percent) in their Indian subsidiaries. Proposals for owning more than a 51 percent share will be examined by the Government on a case by case basis.

(d) Many of the regulations which linked granting import permits to export performance have been scrapped. This will allow businesses to expand in the manner which they find to be most profitable.

(e) Some selected state enterprises are being privatized by initially offering up to 20 percent equity to private shareholders. Depending on the success of the scheme and the experience gained this process may be hastened.

Mere announcement of attractive schemes, however, will not be enough. The GOI will have to show the world that it has the will to implement what it has proposed. This will, no doubt, take time and, understandably, one does not expect foreign capital to come rushing into India. Nevertheless, the time is

now ripe for American businesses to evaluate afresh the Indian option. At a time when the United States is experiencing a growing trade deficit, manufacturing in India with the attendant reduced labour costs and other overhead might be an economically viable proposition.

On its part the GOI needs to resolve with the US Administration some important issues. India was one of the three countries named under the provisions of Super 301 for investigation. The United States Trade Representative (USTR) during her visit to New Delhi in the fall of 1991 had made the US Government's position quite clear. While the GOI has agreed in principle with some of the demands made by the USTR, on others it has reservations. Thus, for example, the GOI concedes that the Indian patent and other laws governing Intellectual Property Rights need to be reviewed. At the same time it feels that the demand for lowering import tariffs strictly does not fall within the ambit of bilateral issues but should be governed by existing international regimes such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

The US Administration should appreciate that the recent concessions made by the GOI are already drawing heavy flak from various quarters within India. The present government is still a minority government and while for the present the opposition parties may be going along with it on economic issues, there is no guarantee that they will continue to do so, if it is not in their political interest. Any precipitate punitive action or an attempt to 'drive a hard bargain' and to push the present govern-

ment too far too quickly may in fact result in its fall and prove to be counterproductive. At this stage it will be an act of great statesmanship on the part of the United States to give the Indian government some time to show its sincerity and resolve to vigorously pursue the reforms on which it has embarked. As Dr. Abid Hussain, India's ambassador to the United States has said:

"Now, with the passage of India's Economic Reforms, the world's largest democracy can meet the world's oldest democracy on an economically level field, playing the same economic game. And most marvellous of all ... it is a game we both can win."⁴⁷

Yet another area where the two governments need to interact is the one of developmental aid/loans. While the increased investment by the American private sector in India will produce larger amounts of goods and services, paradoxically almost 90 percent of Indians will not be able to buy them, simply because they do not have the economic power to do so. The large consumer market referred to above constitutes only 10 percent of India's population. Massive sums of monies are required to finance social development schemes of education, infrastructure building, primary health care and family planning, and so on. These are areas in which for reasons already discussed the private sector is unlikely to show much enthusiasm. Moreover, with the diversity and complexity of languages, castes, communities, religion, educational levels, levels of economic development, social customs and traditions, and the problem of sheer numbers, such schemes have to be undertaken by the government and are beyond the capabilities of private concerns. Thus, and perhaps ironi-

cally, in order that the American investors in India increase their profits, the US Government will have to get involved in backing/granting developmental funds for India.

Military/Security Relations

The tempo of interaction and exchanges at various levels between the Indian and the US military has been on the increase in the past five to six years. For example, in 1986 the US Navy resumed port visits to India after a gap of ten years. However, it was the visit to India in November 1990 by the then Commanding General US Army Pacific (USARPAC), LTG Kickleighter, that gave a positive fillip to the relations between the military establishments of the two countries. In April the following year specific proposals were made by USARPAC, the objective of which was:

"to pursue a common policy of gradually strengthening ties towards expanded cooperation and partnership by the end of this decade through high level visits, exchanges and periodic policy reviews, Indian/US Army staff talks and cooperative work in selected areas of common interest."⁴⁸

Various actions proposed by Gen Kickleighter are already being executed or are under active consideration of the GOI and the Indian Army HQ. There is no doubt that these measures will go a long way in fostering a better understanding of each other's views and concerns.

However, it is felt that it will be in the area of weapons technology that the greatest benefits will accrue to the two countries. India already has a considerable defence industrial base and has been manufacturing under license various weapons

systems incorporating fairly advanced technologies. Since the signing of the November 1984 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between India and the United States on transfer of high technology, the level of trade in 'dual use' high technology items has increased dramatically. The USA is already actively involved in India's project for development of a Light Combat Aircraft. What is more important, India has a sizeable population of technically trained manpower that can put to use the technology that is being imported. It is often not appreciated that India has the third largest pool of scientists and engineering personnel in the world.

As the United States military prepares for its planned force reductions over the next two to three years, the defence industries in this country are going to find it more and more difficult to remain in business, particularly because of the high cost of production in the United States. Although there will still be a demand for their products --complete units as well as sub-assemblies and spares-- in international markets, it is unlikely to be large enough to permit economies of scale to operate. Many have already started closing down and more are threatening to do so every day. The greatest, and the most unfortunate, casualty of this development will most likely be the R & D effort. So far, the defence industrial houses in the United States were spending a substantial proportion of their budget on R & D effort, confident in the hope that they will be able to recover the cost through the sale of their products. With no orders

being placed by the US military, it is most unlikely that the defence industry can any longer afford to invest any meaningful sums for R & D effort. There is thus a real danger that the United States may lose the position of the technological world leader that it occupies today.

One alternative to this grim scenario, of course, is federal funding for military technology related R & D effort. However, in the present situation of high budgetary deficit and emphasis on reduced governmental spending, it is doubtful that the US Congress will authorize any substantial spending on this account -- and the requirement will certainly be substantial. It is with this background that the proposal to enter into some form of manufacturing arrangement with India might begin to look attractive. With the much lower production cost for items manufactured in India, even with the reduced demand the industry should find it a viable proposition. It can then meet a part of the investment required for the R & D effort, the balance being met by the federal government. In such a case the federal expenditure on R & D, which will be more or less in the form of a subsidy, will be much lesser than if it (the federal Government) were to cater for it entirely. Obviously, the political implications of such arrangements will have to be worked out at governmental levels. For example, the United States may want to retain some control over sale of such equipment by India to third parties. Similarly the GOI may like to retain some say in the pricing policies. And so on. However, given the all round benefits to all parties

concerned, it should not be difficult to resolve such issues.

Training for peacekeeping missions is another area which can lend itself for mutual cooperation. There are increasing indications that international peace keeping forces operating under the UN flag, will have a much larger role to play in the future. With 1.3 million men under arms (1.1 million in the Army) India today has the fourth largest armed force in the world. With the projected force reduction of the US military, and the likely break up and distribution amongst the constituents of the armed forces of the former Soviet Union, India may well emerge with the second largest army in the world. As a matter of convention, in the past the permanent members of the Security Council have not been contributing military contingents to the UN peace keeping forces. As such, it is quite likely that in the future India may be called upon more frequently to make a contribution to such forces as and when they are constituted.

Essentially, a multi-national UN force would have to operate in the same manner as a multi-national coalition. Although in the past India has been contributing contingents for peace keeping missions, she has little experience in leading such a force. Her experience in Sri Lanka was of limited value in this field since she virtually operated autonomously in her geographical area of operations. This is a domain in which the US has tremendous experience. The US expertise in the staff organization and command of such forces, and the Indian experience in actual conduct of operations on ground, could thus complement

each other. Suitably planned and conducted training courses run in each country and attended by personnel of suitable ranks could prove to be very useful and would further strengthen mutual understanding.

To conclude this chapter, then, the future holds exciting prospects for Indo-US relations, be they in political/diplomatic, trade and economic, or military fields. The demise of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War has presented both the countries with a window of opportunity, which their respective leaders must recognize. Posterity will never forgive them if this is not done. In order to bring to fruition any meaningful and healthy relationship both must understand each other's compulsions and above all, be patient with the other.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"Life is the art of drawing sufficient conclusions from insufficient premises."

- Samuel Butler.

India and United States, despite a large number of shared values, have not had the closest of relations in the past. Partly this was due to ignorance; the Americans found India to be too remote and as a colony of the British not within their area of interest, while the Indians had contacts mostly with the British, their colonial rulers. This was also due to misunderstanding each other's positions. By an accident of history the commencement of India's journey as an independent nation coincided with the commencement of the Cold War. The vast majority of the world's population, then being still under colonial rule, was a silent spectator to this development. India alone voiced what she believed to be the right policy for a newly independent, poor country who wanted nothing to do with the wars and ambitions of America and the industrially developed nations of Europe. Most of the differences between India and the United States can be traced back to this single fact.

Happily, that irritant no longer exists. That is not to say that there are no other irritants. The mind sets and stereotypes that the two have developed about each other over the last 45 years will continue to haunt the policy makers in both the countries for some years to come. But at least now they appear to be willing to listen to each other with an open mind. For their mutual good and benefit, the two must strengthen their ties

in those areas in which their interests converge and 'agree to disagree' where they don't. Both must be aware of each other's sensitivities and try and avoid treading on them.

In the political and world order categories of interests both share the desire to see democracies come to power. While support of democracy must continue to guide their actions in international fields, they should appreciate that democracy cannot be imposed. Some immediate and positive initiatives need to be taken in support of the central Asian constituents of the CIS and in Afghanistan. Positive and friendly relations with Iran will help keep that country on a moderate and pragmatic course and prevent her from coming under the sway of fundamentalists. The principle of bilateralism should govern the relations between India and Pakistan. The latter should, however, be discouraged by diplomatic and other means short of war, to desist from supporting the terrorists operating against India. With the other members of the SAARC, India must be patient and continue with her present policies of persuasion and bilateralism. With China, India can expect better relations in the years to come. However, there is no room yet for any euphoria. India must review her nuclear stand and must try to understand and respect the sentiments of the world community.

In the economic field, India needs to set her house in order. The steps she has initiated are welcome and the United States should give them a fair chance and adequate time to succeed. Efforts to hasten the pace of economic reform and

application of pressure tactics may prove to be counterproductive and not in the best interest of either country. The United States should use her considerable moral and financial influence to help India with her schemes for social development.

In the military field the initiatives already taken should be pursued vigorously. Additionally, the possibility of defence production in India must be explored. Such an arrangement will benefit India, the US Government as well as the defence manufacturers in the United States. India has the necessary industrial base and the technical manpower for participating in such projects. Training in peacekeeping operations also offers scope for mutually beneficial cooperation.

END NOTES

1. Inscription on the statue of Thomas Hart Benton, a Missouri Senator; cited in Kamath M. V.; *The United States and India:1776-1976*; The Embassy of India, Washington, DC, 1976, P 9.
2. Talbot Phillips and Poplai S.L.; *India and America: A Study of Their Relations*; Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Harper and Brothers, New York; 1958. P 13.
3. Nuechterlein Donald E., *America Overcommitted:United States National Interests in 1980s*; The University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, 1985. P 7. (Emphasis added).
4. For a graphic description of Nehru's opposition to communism and the position and status of Communists in India see Bowles Chester; *Ambassador's Report*; Harper and Brothers, New York, 1954. Chapters 9 and 10.
5. Talbot and Poplai; *op cit* , pp 55-56.
6. [sic]. Seligman Eustace; *What the United States Can Do About India*; New York University Press, New York, 1956. P 13.
7. Talbot and Poplai; *op cit* ; p 63
8. Nehru, Jawaharlal;
9. Address at Iowa College on June 1956, US Department of State Bulletin, Vol. XXXIV, No. 886 (June 18, 1956), pp 999-1000; cited in Chakravarty B.N., *India Speaks to America*; John Day & Co., New York, 1966. pp 34-35.
10. Hardgrave Robert L. Jr., *Continuity and Change in India's Foreign Policy : The Next Five Years*; University of Texas, Austin; January 1984. p 1.
11. Chakravarty; *op cit*; pp 33-36.
12. *ibid*; pp 54-55. Emphasis added.
13. Das M.N.; *The Political Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru*; John Day and Company, New York, 1961. P 132.
14. Moraes Frank; *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*; The MacMillan Company, New York, 1956; P 111. Emphasis added.
15. Talbot and Poplai; *op cit*; P 138.
16. Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston; speech on the Polish Question in the House of Commons; 1848.

17. cf. Seligman, *op cit*; P 17.
18. Nuechterlein; *op cit*. This work has been heavily drawn upon in this Chapter.
19. Smith, Jeffrey R.; *Washington Post*; 09 February 1992.
20. *National Security Strategy of the United States*; The White House, Washington (DC); August 1991; P 10.
21. *The World Fact Book, 1991*; Central Intelligence Agency; Washington (DC). Compare this, for example, with the United Kingdom who has a merchant marine of some 6.2 million DWT.
22. *The Military Balance, 1991*; The UNIIMOG was formed consequent to the declaration of cease fire on 08 August 1988. Its mandate expired on 28 February 1991.
23. Coll, Steve; *Washington Post*; 15 Nov 91. Also see *India Today*, Vol XVI, Number 23, december 1-15, 1991.
24. The total population was estimated to be 46,484,000 the breakdown being Uzbekistan - 18,479,000; Kazakhstan - 16,036,000; Tadzikistan - 4,643,000; Kirghizistan - 4,055,000; and Turkmenistan - 3,271,000. *Kaleidoscope : Current World Data*; ABC-Clio, Inc.; Santa Barbara, 1989.
25. Whiting, Allen S.; *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence : India and Indochina*; Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1975. Pp 32-34.
26. Laohoo, Willy L.; *PRC-Taiwan Relations : Towards the Path of Reunification*; Published in *Asian Thought and Society*, Volume XVI, No 47, May-September 1991; East-West Publishing Company Ltd., Oneonta, New York, 1990. P 162.
27. Launched in 1985, the Association is a non-military, non-economic organization having seven members namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
28. Hossain Ishtiaq; *Regional Order in South Asia : Sine Qua Non for Indian Foreign Policy*; Published in *Asian Thought and Society*; *op cit*, P 121.
29. In *Panchatantra*, an ancient Indian literary work, there is a parable about a fox who, while proffering to adjudicate between two monkeys fighting over some bread, ends up eating the whole loaf himself!
30. Hossain Ishtiaq; *op cit*; P.125.

31. Ford, T.R., Colonel; *Indian Ocean Demands More Attention*; Published in *Pacific Defence Reporter*, November 1989, Pp 15-23.
32. *Sources of Change in the Future Security Environment*; A paper by the Future Security Environment Working Group, submitted to the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy; The Pentagon, Washington (DC); April 1988. P 4
33. Bratersky, M.V. and Lunyov, S.I.; *India at the End of the Century:Transformation Into an Asian Regional Power*; Published in *Asian Survey*, Volume 30, No 10 (October 1990). P 927.
34. An analysis of the voting pattern on important political and colonial issues raised in the United Nations between 1952 and 1963, shows that of 274 issues voted upon, in 90 cases India, the USA and the USSR concurred, in 62 India voted with the United States and against the USSR, in 61 with the Soviet union and against the USA and in 61 her vote differed from that of both the USA and the USSR. Some of the issues on which India voted against the USA were such perpetual issues as the motions on apartheid in South Africa and admittance of China to the world body. Chakravarty; *op cit*; Pp 102-105.
35. Bowles, Chester; *A View From New Delhi*; Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1969. Fronticepiece.
36. Text of the Agreement cited by Hossain Ishtiaq; *op cit*; P 125. Emphasis added.
37. The Press Council of India is an independent and autonomous body which performs a 'watch dog' function and tries to ensure responsible journalism in the Indian Press. Although it has no punitive authority, it can indict reporters, newspapers and their owners or editors for violation of journalistic code of truthful reporting. For example, during the communal riots sparked off by agitations for demolition of a mosque at the alleged birthplace of Rama, a Hindu God, the Press Council found some local papers guilty of deliberately exaggerating and twisting the truth and casualty figures so as to incite communal hatred.
38. Relevant portions of a mimeographed copy of the report are available with the author. Copies may also be obtained from the Embassy of India, Washington (DC).
39. *ibid*.
40. *ibid*.
41. *India Today*; December 15, 1991.

42. According to an article by General Khalid Mohammed Arif, a member of the Steering Committee of Pakistan's bomb project, and published in the *Dawn*, a leading Pakistani English language Daily, "... the prevailing realities indicate that the proposal for a nuclear-free South Asia has been overtaken by time. There is a need now to discuss a proposal for creating a nuclear weapons-safe South Asia." Quoted by K. Subrahmanyam; *Nuclear Deterrent is Cheaper*; Published in *The Hindustan Times*; New Delhi, 19 February 1992, P 13.

43. *The World Fact Book*; *op cit*; P 142.

44. *Backgrounder*, No. 103; Asian Studies Center, The Heritage Foundation, Washington D.C., 24 April 1990.

45. *Raj* can be loosely translated as regime.

46. Pura, Raphael; *New Economic Order : Nation Ripe for Reform*; *The Wall Street Journal*; October 21, 1991.

47. Dr. Abid Hussain; *India:Economic News*, Vol II, No. 10; Embassy of India (Economic Wing), Washington DC; October 1991.

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